

HONORING THE LIFE OF ELVIN OREN CRAIG

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I would like to honor the life of a special Idahoan who is also the father of my colleague from Idaho, Senator LARRY CRAIG. Elvin Oren Craig, who passed away last week, left many legacies and will be missed by many people. In Idaho, he served as a lifelong advocate for Idaho agriculture, and a leader in Washington County, Midvale and Weiser. He also was very active in his local VFW Post in Midvale, ID. At 87 years old, he had remained active despite a diagnosis of prostate cancer. In fact, he worked until only about 6 months ago when he decided it might be time to let up a little bit. Elvin Craig's legacy also lives on in my colleague and in Senator CRAIG's consistent and honorable service to Idahoans over his years in public office. I know that Elvin was proud of his son's service to Idaho and the country—first in the Idaho State Senate, then in the U.S. House of Representatives, and now in the U.S. Senate.

Elvin's family and friends know of his community service and his persistent commitment over many years to Idaho's farmers and ranchers and his own family. He worked hard while maintaining his sense of humor. His full life was an outstanding example of what it means to be an Idahoan. I am pleased to pay tribute to a remarkable man, Elvin Oren Craig, and to share my condolences to my friend, LARRY CRAIG, and his family upon the passing of a great man.

SECOND AMENDMENT PROTECTION ACT OF 2005

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce a bill that would withhold United States contributions to the United Nations if the U.N. interferes with the second amendment rights guaranteed by our Constitution.

The U.N. has no business interfering with the second amendment rights guaranteed by our Constitution. That is why I am introducing legislation to safeguard our citizens against any potential infringement of their second amendment rights.

In July, 2001, the U.N. convened a conference, known as the "Conference on the Illicit Trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in July 2001." One outcome of the conference was a resolution entitled, "The United Nations Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects." This resolution calls for actions that could abridge the second amendment rights of individuals in the United States, including: (1) national registries and tracking lists of legal firearms; (2) the establishment of an international tracking certificate, which could be used to ensure U.N. monitoring of the export, import, transit, stocking, and

storage of legal small arms and light weapons; and (3) worldwide record keeping for an indefinite amount of time on the manufacture, holding, and transfer of small arms and light weapons.

The U.N. also wishes to establish a system for tracking small arms and light weapons. How would they do this? It would be done by forcing legal, licensed gun manufacturer's to create identifiable marks for each nation. The gun manufacturer's lists would then be provided to international authorities on behalf of the U.N.

Who would maintain these intrusive lists? Would it be the World Customs Organization, which the U.N. has suggested as a possible vehicle? That organization counts Iran, Syria, China, and Cuba among its membership. Would all World Customs Organization members have access to such lists? In the event that those with access to such information abuse or misuse it, what would be the remedy? How would we prevent unauthorized persons, perhaps criminals and terrorists, from acquiring such information from rogue nations who have declared the United States an enemy?

Some at the U.N. have suggested that tracing certain financial transactions of a legal and law abiding gun industry could be a useful tool in tracking firearms. What would such tracing entail? Does the U.N. expect to receive private U.S. banking records of a legal and law abiding industry?

Furthermore, the U.N. has encouraged member States to integrate measures to control ammunition with regard to small arms, and some members have expressed a desire to tax international arms sales. The U.N. has no legal right or authority to collect a tax from American citizens to further any agenda, especially gun control measures.

The U.S. Constitution has guaranteed our citizens the right to keep and bear arms. I intend to help protect that right with this legislation. I urge my colleagues to support the Second Amendment Protection Act of 2005.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2005

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. Each Congress, Senator KENNEDY and I introduce hate crimes legislation that would add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society. Likewise, each Congress I have come to the floor to highlight a separate hate crime that has occurred in our country.

Last year, an African-American transgender woman was brutally beaten, raped, and strangled in a San Francisco hotel. The murder is under investigation and anti-transgender bias has been looked into as a motive.

I believe that the government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend

them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act is a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.

CONGRESSMAN JOHN LEWIS AND THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, last month, the debate over the nomination of Judge William Pryor to the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals included a discussion of Judge Pryor's call to repeal section 5 of the Voting Rights Act—the centerpiece of that landmark statute—because, as he asserted in congressional testimony, it "is an affront to federalism and an expensive burden that has far outlived its usefulness." His testimony demonstrated that Judge Pryor is more concerned with preventing an "affront" to the States' dignity than with guaranteeing all citizens the right to cast an equal vote.

In the Republican defense of Judge Pryor, it was suggested that Congressman JOHN LEWIS, a stalwart leader of the civil rights movement, somehow agreed with Judge Pryor's opposition to section 5 of the Voting Rights Act because of a statement Congressman LEWIS had made about a specific redistricting plan.

Congressman LEWIS has made clear many times, most recently in a July 14 letter to me, his disagreement with the views of Judge Pryor and his strong support for the Voting Rights Act—and particularly section 5. Congressman LEWIS wrote:

Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act must be renewed. There is a continued, proven need for the pre-clearance provisions of the Voting Rights Act, which ensure that local and state jurisdiction do not develop laws that intentionally or unintentionally discriminate against groups who may have little or no voice in the establishment of those laws.

His statements of support for one particular redistricting plan in no way diminish his commitment to the Voting Rights Act.

Congressman LEWIS believes, as do I, that the Voting Rights Act is our most important protection guaranteeing that no individuals or groups are without a voice in this democracy. As he so eloquently noted:

The history of the right to vote in America is a history of conflict, of struggling for the right to vote. Many people died trying to protect that right. I was beaten and jailed because I stood up for it. For millions like me, the struggle for the right to vote is not mere history; it is experience. The experience of the last two presidential elections tells us that the struggle is not over and that the special provisions of the Voting Rights Act are still necessary.

I ask unanimous consent that Congressman LEWIS's letter be printed in the RECORD at the end of my statement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. LEAHY. In contrast, Judge Pryor's statements about section 5 reflect a long-discredited view of the Voting Rights Act. Since the enactment of the statute in 1965, every Supreme Court case to address the question has rejected the claim that section 5 is an "affront" to our system of federalism. Whether under Earl Warren, Warren Burger, or William Rehnquist, the U.S. Supreme Court has recognized that guaranteeing all citizens the right to cast an equal vote is essential to our democracy—no a "burden" that has "outlived its usefulness."

Indeed, Congressman LEWIS sponsored a resolution, which is being considered on the floor of the House today, commemorating the passage of the Voting Rights Act 40 years ago this summer. The resolution recalls the struggle for the act's landmark protections—from the brutal suppression of marchers on the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, AL, on "Bloody Sunday" in March 1965, to the passage of the bill by a bipartisan Congress months later—and reaffirms its importance. Forty years after President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act into law, Congressman LEWIS and I remain committed to this essential piece of legislation.

EXHIBIT 1

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, July 14, 2005.

Senator PATRICK J. LEAHY,
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary,
U.S. Senate, Dirksen Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR LEAHY: During the Senate debate on the nomination of Judge William Pryor to the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals, Senator Saxby Chambliss quoted a few words of my testimony in the case of the State of Georgia v. John Ashcroft, and implied that I agree with Judge Pryor's assessment of Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act. I take issue with Senator Chambliss's remarks and want to make clear that his reference to my remarks were taken out of context.

I regret that my colleague, the senior Senator from Georgia, would use my support of a Georgia redistricting plan to justify the confirmation of Justice William Pryor to the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals. I strongly disagree with the views of Judge Pryor and do not think he is fit to serve.

I further regret that Senator Chambliss would use my very general statements to suggest that I am not in favor of renewing Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act. Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act must be renewed. There is a continued, proven need for the pre-clearance provisions of the Voting Rights Act, which ensure that local and state jurisdictions do not develop laws that intentionally or unintentionally discriminate against groups who may have little or no voice in the establishment of those laws.

We have come a long way in the last two decades, and certainly have come a long way since the 1960's, however, voting obstacles and disparities still exist for far too many minorities. In Florida in 2000, voters were confused by their ballots, polling equipment broke down, and polls did not open as scheduled. In Ohio in 2004, many people stood in what appeared to be unmovable lines for eight and nine hours trying to exercise their right to vote. There were an inadequate number of voting machines and in some in-

stances, bogus officials were sent to polling stations and were found disseminating misinformation and questioning the choices of voters.

As a result of these problems, many Americans were denied the right to vote. These truths continue to demonstrate the importance of the Voting Rights Act to prevent discrimination and to ensure that people are not denied the right to vote. The vote is the most powerful, nonviolent tool that our citizens have in a democratic society, and nothing but nothing should discourage, hamper or interfere with the right of every citizen to cast a vote for the person of their choice.

The history of the right to vote in America is a history of conflict, of struggling for the right to vote. Many people died trying to protect that right. I was beaten, and jailed because I stood up for it. For millions like me, the struggle for the right to vote is not mere history; it is experience. The experience of the last two presidential elections tells us that the struggle is not over and that the special provisions of the Voting Rights Act are still necessary. We should not take a step backward, when there is still much to be done to ensure every vote and every voter counts.

As we work toward reauthorizing the Voting Rights Act, we must move in a deliberative manner, conduct open and adequate hearings, and ensure that we create the appropriate legislative history and factual findings. I look forward to working with you to protect the voting rights of all Americans, by reauthorizing and strengthening the provisions of the Voting Rights Act.

Sincerely,

JOHN LEWIS,
Member of Congress.

AIR FORCE ACADEMY'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY AND NASA'S RETURN TO FLIGHT.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I today observe two momentous occasions: the Space Shuttle's Return to Flight and the 50th anniversary of the U.S. Air Force Academy.

Yesterday, at 10:39 a.m. eastern daylight time, the Space Shuttle *Discovery* safely lifted off from its launch pad at Cape Canaveral, FL. It blasted into orbit carrying seven of our Nation's finest, on a mission to resupply the International Space Station, test the Shuttle, and resume America's manned exploration of the cosmos.

I want to thank NASA's Administrator, Michael Griffin, and the thousands of men and women who have worked tirelessly in the wake of the *Columbia* tragedy to upgrade the safety of our space mission. Their commitment and courage have helped turn our Nation's dreams to the heavens and stars once again.

Also this month, we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the entrance of the first class of cadets to the Air Force Academy.

It is fitting that NASA's return to flight occurs at a moment when we are reflecting on the Air Force Academy's first half century of service, because the Academy and NASA are two institutions that attract the best men and women in our country. Due to their shared focus on flight, the two institutions are forever linked. In fact, two of

the astronauts guiding the *Discovery* in orbit overhead right now come from the Air Force Academy.

LTC Eileen Collins, a former professor in the Air Force Academy's Mathematics Department, is currently soaring 122 miles above us as the commander of the Shuttle's return to flight. Raised in public housing in upstate New York, Eileen Collins broke through every barrier laid before her to become the first woman to pilot a Shuttle. When she came to the Air Force Academy in 1986 she helped usher in a new era at the Academy, an era where women were allowed to compete and succeed on an equal playing field. We in Colorado are very proud that Lieutenant Colonel Collins' journey to space brought her to the Air Force Academy.

Sitting next to Lieutenant Colonel Collins today in the Space Shuttle is *Discovery's* pilot, James Kelly, Air Force Academy class of 1986.

James Kelly grew up in the small town of Burlington, IA, where the sounds of passing airplanes inspired dreams of spaceflight. The Air Force Academy gave James Kelly the tools, training, and opportunity to take to the skies. It gave him, and the thousands of other young men and women who have passed through its gates, a mission to serve our country and the greater good.

Astronauts Collins and Kelly represent the best of the Academy they represent the best of its students and the best of its faculty. They remind us that the Academy's proud mission continues to be of immeasurable value to our nation.

Yesterday's successful Space Shuttle launch reminds us that despite the challenges that still face the Academy, the institution has, for half a century, produced some of our finest leaders.

The 360 civilians who took the oath on July 12, 1955, to become the first Air Force Academy cadets built a legacy of leadership that is at the foundation of the institution's mission. Three generations of young people have passed through the Academy and have learned to lead our nation in times of war and peace.

They live by the Academy's core values, "integrity first, service beyond self, and excellence in all we do." They inspire us all.

They inspire us because they are American pioneers like Eileen Collins, first in her field.

They inspire us because they are represented by the cadet who told me he chose the Academy because, quote, "the country needs me—our freedoms need my protection."

And the Academy's cadets inspire us because they are leading our Return to Flight, lifting our thoughts from tragedy to the triumphant possibilities of space exploration.

I congratulate the Air Force Academy, its cadets, staff, and graduates for 50 years of excellence.

And along with millions of Americans, I also wish our astronauts a safe voyage and a speedy return.